

Straight Talk About Evidence-Based Practices in Behavioral Health

Answers to some common questions...

What are “evidence-based practices”?

Evidence-based practices are ways of delivering services to people using scientific evidence that shows that the services actually work.

What were therapists doing before?

They may actually have been using science-based approaches, but it has become much more important that we identify them upfront. Evidence-based practices may be more effective than the approaches therapists are using now.

Is it really worth the extra trouble and expense?

On the whole, yes. There are lots of reasons:

- ✓ People who receive mental health and addictive services have a right to expect that they are getting the best possible outcomes.
- ✓ People who pay for services have a right to expect that the services will actually work.
- ✓ Providers of services want to be accountable for what they do.

Aren't things like “evidence-based practices” and “treatment guidelines” just cookie-cutter medicine?

Not at all. The evidence on which these are based is linked to specific conditions, circumstance, or disorders. They are not designed to do everything for everyone.

So, are there evidence-based practices for every condition or disorder?

Not yet. Although we are making progress, there is a long way to go.

Do all evidence-based practices work for everyone?

We're not sure. Not all of the scientific evidence is in on some practices when delivered to people of differing cultures, for example. But for many, the new practices are better than the care they receive now.

Can evidence-based practices support recovery?

Absolutely. In fact, properly used evidence-based practices involve consumers and families as partners. They are not things done TO people, they are strategies to support changes that matter to the people using the services.

How can I help make evidence-based practices a reality where I live or work?

The most important thing is to learn as much as possible about evidence-based practices. Don't think that you have to be a scientist or a researcher or an expert to be successful in implementing evidence-based practices.

Are there resources where I can learn more?

Sure. There is information available on the internet at www.tacinc.org or www.achma.org. Included on these websites is access to *Turning Knowledge into Practice*.

Turning Knowledge into Practice: A Manual for Behavioral Health Administrators and Practitioners About Understanding and Implementing Evidence-Based Practices is a manual that can help make evidence-based practices work for you. To order a copy, see order form on reverse side.

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The production and distribution of *Turning Knowledge Into Practice* is made possible in part by a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

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